

May X, 2017

Acting Commissioner Kevin McAleenan
Office of the Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Room 4.4A
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner McAleenan:

I am writing to bring an important matter to your attention as you take over as leader of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). I represent Texas' 28th district, which includes nearly 180 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border as well as my hometown of Laredo. As you know, cross-border trade and travel is a hallmark of daily life as well as a central economic driver along the border. The border's central role in our lives require us to pursue a border security and customs enforcement strategy that balances robust security and enforcement with efficient processing of traffic at ports. Unnecessary delays are a drain on the border region's economy and quality of life, as well as our border officers' time and resources.

I understand CBP is pursuing automation of its cargo processing system for tractor trailers in commercial lanes at land ports, moving from a manual system towards a technology-based one that could reduce traffic delays at border crossings while allowing officers to maintain their own safety and rigor of enforcement. I also understand CBP plans to develop a pilot testing different technologies for automation at Laredo Juarez-Lincoln Port of Entry. I applaud these efforts to build a system suited to the needs of a bustling port like Laredo, and I hope that Congress' recent passage of FY 2017 funding omnibus will push these efforts forward.

I also hope that CBP will conduct a full and fair review of the applicability and efficacy of potential solutions for automation, including high-accuracy license plate readers (LPRs), a thoroughly vetted and proven technology in border security. I am extremely interested in ensuring that our border officers and economy benefit from the efficiency and safety improvements the most effective, accurate, and reliable technology can offer. I ask that the CBP keep me informed about their progress in reviewing the merits of different technologies for this automation effort, as well as their overall progress in developing and executing this pilot at Laredo Juarez-Lincoln Port of Entry.

Thank you for reading and for considering my request. Please consider me and my office as a resource to your efforts to effectively and safely automate commercial vehicle processing.

Respectfully,

Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress